

The Soul of Polynesia

Still living in a little native house
across the
stream is his *vdhine*, the nude in his
picture
entitled " Nevermore/" but in
Papeete he is
mainly known as the painter in
connection with
whom the world without,
incomprehensibly to the
bourgeois population of the island,
played upon
them the most annoying trick of the
century.

It neglected him even as they during
his life, but
now that he is dead it would pay them
a fortune
for one of the carvings or the paintings
that they
refused to buy for a score of francs in
the open
market at the auction which followed
his death.
The purchaser of his property made a
bonfire of
* rubbish " which to-day would make
him the
richest man in Tahiti, while two young
French
officers picked up for one hundred and
fifty francs
a picture that changed hands the other
day for
eighty thousand.

The romance of Ms life provided Mr,
Somerset
Maugham with the substance of the
story of James

Strickland in "The Moon and
Sixpence/" But he
was a Frenchman, his retreat in Tahiti
was here
in Punaauia and not at Tautira, he
died in the
Marquesas in 1903, and it was not
leprosy that
killed him. Nevertheless the book is
true enough